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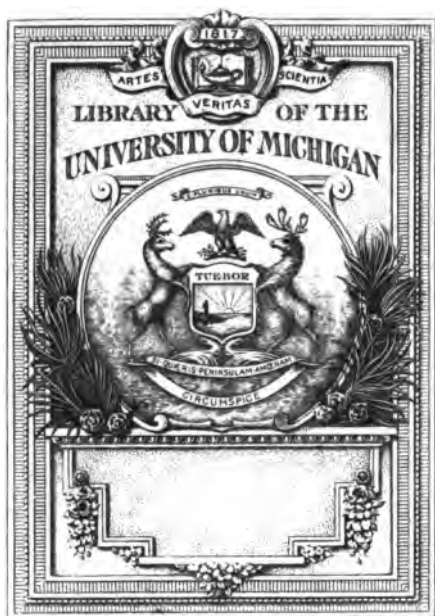
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Blamville, John
THE

FAIR PERSIAN,

AN EASTERN TALE,

IN TWO CANTOS, WITH NOTES.

ET RUIT IN VETITUM DAMNI SECURA LIBIDO.

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCE REGENT,
AND
THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND,

WHOSE wisdom and persevering Patriotism
saved their Country from anarchy, and Europe
from desolation, this Poem is dedicated with
feelings of the deepest gratitude and respect,

By their devoted,

Humble Servant,

JOHN GLANVILLE.

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The Fair Persian.

AN EASTERN TALE.

OUR hearts be glad when treacherous fortune smiles,
Nor deem the dimples in her cheek are wiles.

Ah! me, the mildest aspect she can wear,
Is but the mournful prelude to despair,
We dream of pleasures we can never know,
But wake to sad realities of woe :

Some blossom's blighted, or some flower is dead,
And hope, the wretch's cynosure, is fled :
The form we doat on waneth in her bloom,
And every joy is buried in her tomb.

What to the wounded breast can balm bestow,
Save death, the only paraclete of woe.

Fair clime of nature's loveliest bloom,
Save man unworthy of such doom ;

Where through the year the rosy hours
 Fling from their golden wing fresh flowers ;
 Where, from her teeming bosom, earth,
 Gives to a thousand beauties birth :
 For there a thousand Eden's bloom,
 And zephyrs wake and waft perfume ;
 Which dropping sweets at every sigh,
 Gather fresh fragrance as they fly
 O'er garden bower, and orange grove,
 The scenes of the fond virgin's love :
 Each eye that gazeth must confess,
 That every charm conspires to bless
 Those scenes of love and loveliness ;
 Or some to wild conjecture given,
 Might deem the denizens of heaven,
 To match the mansions of the skies,
 Had fixed on earth this paradise.
 Then, maids there be, so fond, so fair,
 Seem transcripts of the beauties there ;
 So formed for love, so fit they be
 For joyaunce, and for revelry.

Yet, here can passions fires inflame
 To deeds so foul,—they want a name.
 There came a maid whose charms display
 The glories of an eastern day ;
 The hues of her luxuriant hair,
 Outvie the golden kerhubâr.(a)
 The loves and every sister grace,
 Sat smiling in her seraph face ;
 Which, dy'd with love's soft blush, when seen
 Shew'd like the blooming garden queen ;
 The languor of her light blue eye,
 Where all her soul's fond passions lie,
 Has power to fascinate the gaze,
 And lose the heart in love's wild maze.
 Each look some new-born charm betrays ;
 As if your eye one glimpse had caught
 Of her fair form, you might have thought,
 Some Houri left her Paradise,
 To charm each mortal's wondering eyes.
 Such by their holy prophet's creed,
 In scenes of joyaunce be the meed,
 Of Moslem faith, and warrior deed.(b)

But whose that flower in beauty's pride ?
 'Tis SELIM's own affianc'd bride ;
 Who waits the maid at evening hour,
 Within the lonely jas'mine bower.

" Why comes the lovely maid in tears ?
 " Grief 'ill beseems thy tender years ;
 " Soul of my soul, what grieves thee ? speak,
 " Why fade the roses from thy cheek ?
 " Droop not, Fair Persian, why this fear,
 " When thy lov'd SELIM is so near ?
 " Come, wipe away those drops of pearl,
 " Nay, spare, I pray, that guiltless curl,
 " Have I been faithless to my love ?
 " For SELIM is not wont to rove ;
 " Or who has dared to breathe offence,
 " 'Gainst thee, thou soul of innocence ?
 " By ALLA ! not his heart's best blood,
 " Shall sate my passions' furious mood."

" My griefs are thine, as thou shalt hear
 " For thou hast equal cause to fear,

" Our joys have seen their latest hour,
 " And storms of woe begin to lower.
 " For ere another day is fled,
 " Thy bride may grace Mohammed's bed,
 " But I will rather die, than be
 " That thou hast never been to me ;
 " Ere I betray my plighted faith,
 " May these sad eyes be clos'd in death ;
 " Believe me, what I say is sooth,
 " His marble heart is void of ruth,
 " Should Houri kneel before his throne,
 " And mercy ask in angel's tone,
 " If but his love be turned to hate,
 " The bow-string will decide her fate ;
 " No mercy in that bosom dwelt,
 " No pangs of pity there were felt,
 " When the dark fiend his hands embrued,
 " ('Gainst nature,) in a parent's blood.
 " The throne, his soul's supreme desire,
 " He bought by the blood of his aged sire."

In vain would SELIM sooth her fear,
 And hush the throbbing bosom's sigh ;
 He kissed away the falling tear,

That sparkled in her languid eye.

'Twas brighter than the brightest gem,
 That glitters round a diadem.

More precious, for it flowed to prove

How fond her soul, how firm her love,

His arms entwin'd the soft-eyed maid,

Her head upon his breast was laid.

He gazed, and fondly loved to trace

The bloom, the beauty of her face,

The innocence that aids that bloom.

Then bless'd his more than blessed doom

Then curs'd the tyrant for a giaour,(c)

Who'd rob him of so fair a flower.

“ Thou bloody tyrant of the bow,

“ Is there no arm to lay thee low ? -

“ But thou shalt feel the prophet's ire,

“ When Azrael comes on clouds of fire.(d)

" But vengeance points a nearer way,
 " And vengeance ill can brook delay ;
 " Within my breast she ne'er shall slumber,
 " Till victims fall,—'twere vain to number ;
 " Before to-morrow's sun is set,
 " Death and the tyrant shall have met ;
 " And vengeance shall with fire and sword
 " Spread desolation at my word ;
 " And those who may escape the fight,
 " Shall after deem the reign of light,
 " Ne'er ended in a bloodier night. }
 " These scenes a mournful monument shall be,
 " Of guilt the tomb, the grave of tyranny.

Unwearied time was fleeting fast,
 Each moment sweeter than the last :
 How soon are hours of joyaunce fled ;
 Yes soon they pass, joys soon are dead.
 Pass'd like the shadow of a dream,
 Nor leave behind the faintest gleam.
 Woe courts oblivion for relief,
 But memory paints our hours of grief,

Reflection haunts us like the sight
Of some dark vision of the night.

“ Yes, we must part—this very hour.
“ I go to curb the tyrant’s power.
“ Once more, Fair Persian, ere I go,
“ One fond embrace, oh ! smile not so ;
“ Thy fondness more than wounds my heart,
“ One fleeting hour from thee to part.
“ To night, if no mischance befall,
“ I’ll meet thee in the banquet hall.”

He sighed, and left the lovely maid,
Who through the lonely garden stray’d,
And gather’d many a fragrant blossom
From the mead’s enamell’d bosom ;
Then sought her favorite orange grove,
To weave a chaplet for her love.

Oft would this pair together stray,
Through every grove and garden bower ;
There wanton time in joys away,
Nor dream’d they of an evil hour ;

He'd pluck, perchance, some blooming flower,
 Expressive type of passion's power ;
 Then waiting for her fond reply,
 Her soul would answer through her eye ;
 Her voice, her lute, by turns could move,
 Her SELIM's *savage* soul to love.
 Yes, *savage*—witness other climes,
 Whose shores he stain'd with bloodiest crimes ;
 From some far distant land he came,
 And own'd, perhaps, a nobler name ;
 For on his visage you might trace,
 The ensigns of a warrior race ;
 To blood had vengeance steel'd his breast,
 By deepest injuries oppress'd.
 But let for all his deeds gone by,
 Oblivion silence obloquy.
 What, though he seem'd, by insult stung,
 A tigress baffled of her young,
 At beauty's sigh his breast could swell,
 There pity had not ceas'd to dwell ;
 He cherish'd all those generous fires,
 Which warm'd the bosoms of his sires ;

Unworn by toil his giant form,
 Unshaken by the battle-storm,
 Ne'er did such raven tresses grow,
 Ne'er curl'd above a darker brow ;
 Ne'er glar'd a fiercer eye beneath,
 Its flash the harbinger of death.

His firm resolve, no fear could wave,
 His mind could plan, his soul could dare.

SELIM, the bravest of the brave,
 Deserv'd the fairest of the fair.
 For he, amid the battle's strife,
 With peril sav'd her parent's life,
 What time his own brave father fell.
 In war against the infidel,
 A Tartar on a jet black barb,
 Who knew the *Vizier* by his garb,
 Rush'd on his prize with furious speed,
 But SELIM sav'd him in his need,
 His mighty arm, not rais'd in vain,
 Had cleft the infidel in twain ;
 His sabre carv'd the way to save,
 And many a foeman found a grave ;

Old GRAFFIER's daughter was the meed,
 Of him that wrought so bold a deed.
 But he is to the mountains gone,
 Nor will he tarry there alone ;
 For in the sun's bright beams afar,
 Is gleaming many a scimeter,
 Of Tartars all equipt for war ;
 And Arabs too, a bolder band
 Ne'er serv'd a nobler chief's command,
 To-morrow night each sabre's hilt
 Shall stream with the hot blood that's spilt,
 The forfeit of Mohammed's guilt.

The council of the day began,
 That morning with a full divan ;
 The Sultan on his throne of state,
 His Scheiks and Emirs round him wait
 His wishes eager to fulfil,
 The bondsmen of a tyrant's will.
 Old GRAFFIER came, and he alone,
 Not prostrate, dare approach the throne.

The Sultan bade the chief that day,
 To bring the maid to his serai,
 Nor deem'd that he would answer—nay.
 But when he heard his suit denied,
 That fair SAFIE WAS SELIM's bride,
 He felt the pangs of wounded pride ;
 His eyes dark glare and savage grin,
 Bespoke the hell that lurk'd within ;
 And they whose daring eye might scan
 This savage, had not deem'd him man.

“ By ALLA ! now thy words are bold,
 “ Soon shall a tale of death be told ;
 “ For know thine earthly race is run,
 “ Thy body shall be peicemeal rent,
 “ Thy head on yonder battlement
 “ Shall blacken in to-morrow's sun ;
 “ Thy daughter, too, shall dread my power,
 “ And linger many a dreary hour,
 “ Within the lonely harem's tower.
 “ Still more,—for thine accursed race
 “ Shall perish all, nor leave one trace, (c)
 “ Save monuments of their disgrace :

- “ To-morrow the dark hour shall come.”
 “ To-morrow !—Tyrant ; dread *thy* doom,
 “ Fate, shrouded in hell’s blackest gloom,
 “ Shall turn thy palace to a tomb ;
 “ And thou may’st dread the wrath divine,
 “ For guilt’s inheritance is thine ;
 “ These scenes posterity shall hail,
 “ The theme of many a woeful tale.
 “ In vain thy cries may heaven assail,
 “ No prayer to ALLA shall prevail ;
 “ But woe shall peal her funeral wail,
 “ And screams of murder sigh on every gale.

THE END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.



NIGHT's Æthiop pall o'erhung the buried day,
And horror stalk'd abroad amid the gloom ;
No friendly star to shoot a cheering ray,
Save where the cypress waveth o'er the tomb.
The fog-born fires the paths of death illumine, *(f)*
To cheat the traveller on his dreary way.
So smile those hearts that lure us to our doom ;
So treacherous smiling bid us darkling stray,
Where ruin lurks unseen to seize his reckless prey,
So towering where the rocky steep,
Flings its dark shadow o'er the deep ;
The spirit's misty pinions wave, *(g)*
To lure th' unwary seaman to his grave.

Some chief in haste approaches near,
 His courser's clattering hoofs I hear ;
 'Tis SELIM on his raven steed ;
 Right well I know that courser's speed.

His steed's at rest within the stall,
 And SELIM in the banquet hall.
 Their hearts with joyaunce gaily glowing,
 Loud was their laugh of levity ;
 Forbidden bowls were freely flowing,
 To heighten their festivity.

On amber throne was seated there
 The fairest of the eastern fair ;
 A purple vest yfring'd in gold,
 Enwrapt her limbs in wanton fold ;
 Around the brightest em'ralsds shine,
 That ever gemm'd Golconda's mine ;
 And rubies such a lustre lent,
 As might excite the wonderment
 Of those unus'd their eyes to feast
 On the rich splendor of the east.
 Her maidens bloom'd so fair to view,
 'ok'd roses all—and breath'd them too.

Now these in circling maze advance,
 With lightsome tread, and wanton glance;
 Float through the wild circassian dance.(h)

Mirth spread her influence o'er the rest,
 But none pervaded SELIM's breast.

He was not one who lov'd to brood
 For ever over scenes of blood;

But well could wear at times I ween,

As gay a front as e'er was seen ;

But still the fond SAFIE could find

Some grief that prey'd upon his mind ;

Some sorrow rooted in his breast,

To know the cause she fondly prest ;

But when her softest arts prevail,

She listen'd to a mournful tale :—

“ One evening through the groves I stray'd,

“ And sought my love through every shade ;

“ But there no blooming Eden smil'd,

“ The garden seem'd a desert wild ;

“ For though each blossom bloom'd so fair,

“ The sweetest flower was wanting there.

- " The gales could waft no sweets to me,
 " They brought no odours breath'd by thee.
 " That day a noble tiger fell;
 " I left him dead in yonder dell.
 " So, faint and weary with the chace,
 " I sought for rest some peaceful place ;
 " I lay beneath a citron's shade,
 " Beside a fountain's cool cascade ;
 " Lull'd by the rippling of the stream,
 " I slept and saw a fearful dream,
 " Where the sad branches of the cypress wave,
 " The only mourner o'er thy mother's grave ;
 " Methought 'midst gloomy vaults beneath,
 " I wander'd through the paths of death ;
 " The last dark mansions of repose,
 " The paraclete of all our woes.
 " Where Melancholy holds her reign,
 " And Apathy but laughs at pain.
 " There cold oblivion o'er the tomb,
 " Folds her dusky wings in peace ,
 " And in death's sad, but silent gloom,
 " Bids the storms of passion cease ;

" No sorrow's wound, no pang's distress,
 " But all is peace and recklessness,
 " While here I stray'd with silent dread,
 " The graves yawn'd up their reeky dead ;

" Stalk'd many a Goule amid the gloom,
 " Those fleshless dæmons that consume
 " The wither'd tenants of the tomb ;
 " My veins were chill'd with wild affright,
 " But scenes more horrid scar'd my sight.

" Methought I saw thee from a cloud
 " Arising in thy sable shroud ;

" Thy wither'd arm I saw thee wave,
 " And beckon to approach thy grave ;

" These features which like roses blow,
 " Were shaded with death's horrid glow ;

" No speculation in these eyes ;

" But cold and icy was their glance ;

" Thy breast, where many a lily lies,

" Had suffer'd by decay's advance ;

" A Goule approach'd, I heard thee scream,

" And started from my deepest dream.

" Since, strange forebodings have possess,

" And rack'd with anxious doubts my breast

" That thou wilt fall my fears presage,
 " The victim of Mohammed's rage ;
 " But time shall soon roll on the hour,
 " That frees thee from the tyrant's power ;
 " To-morrow's night her veil shall lower,
 " When gleams the torch from the Mosque's high tower ;
 " And we will meet in the olive wood,
 " That waveth o'er the ocean's flood :
 " I go—the time will soon be pass'd,
 " When I shall come like the desert blast."

But he is gone, and with him fled,

The mirth that did their hearts enthrall ;

SARIE in sorrow droop'd her head,

And silence reign'd in the banquet hall ;

All seem'd as though some fiend were sent,

To turn to woe their merriment.

She listen'd to his thundering steed,

And sigh'd as from her startled ear,

The echoes of his hoofs recede :

She ne'er before had blam'd his speed,

That ever in the hour of need,

To safety could his burthen bear.

Loose flow the tresses of her hair,
 The wreaths that erst those temples bound,
 Now lies neglected on the ground ;
 Her cheeks are bath'd with many a tear ;
 From these the rose's blush has fled,
 So the fair lily droops her head,
 Her cup surcharg'd with dew ;
 She seem'd the veriest form of grief,
 That ever nature's pencil drew,
 Her sorrow vainly sought relief,
 For thought could but her tears renew ;
 With tearful eyes and throbbing breast,
 She sought her couch, but not to rest ;
 The reckless mind alone can sleep,
 The wretch's eyes must wake and weep ;
 The heart that's torn by inward woes,
 In vain may hope to find repose ;
 But soon thine hour of rest shall come,
 Both joy and sorrow find a tomb.

The Persian wept the night away,
 Nor hail'd with joy the coming day ;

What, though the beams of the sun shone bright,
The day shall end with a stormy night.

SAFIE is in the tyrant's power,
Confin'd within the Harem's tower ;
There love his eyes might deign to feast,
In the blooming beauties of the east ;
For thousands were assembled there,
The brightest beauties of Kashmeer ;
And many a blue-ey'd Georgian dame,
Might set the gazers heart in flame ;
There soft Circassian maidens strove,
Who first could win the Persian's love.
There wanton many an idle hour,
In language of the fruit and flower ;(i)
SAFIE, to their admiring eyes,
Seem'd some fair maid of Paradise ;
The tears that flow'd from her distress,
Serv'd to but aid her loveliness ;
Around the maid they fondly press'd,
To sooth the sorrows of her breast ;
In vain, the heart that's sear'd by grief,
Looks not to pity for relief ;

But rather seeks for solitude,
In silence o'er its woes to brood.

In vain she tempted the black tribe,
Who wish'd, but durst not take the bribe ;
Good deeds but seldom miss reward !
The chieftain of the Harem guard,
For service that he ow'd her sire,
Array'd her in a slave's attire ;
And now she waits for the friendly night,
Whose darkness may assist her flight.

The sun's bright glories fast are fading,
No sound is heard save where the waters
Are from their marble beds cascading.

The fairest of the sun's fair daughters,
Alone, her love's delay upbraiding,
Is waiting in the olive bower.
A wanton gale has kiss'd a flower—
She starts—above the Harem tower,
A blaze of light is brightly streaming ;
Her trembling bosom own'd a fear,
Perchance her guards had miss'd her there ;

Vain fear, the Mosque's high torches gleaming,
Proclaim the hour of Moslem prayer.

The bulbul mid the groves forlorn,
So chides the dull approach of morn :
Then joys to see his mistress bloom, (h)
What time she sheds her soft perfume ;
Which flies on the wings of the eastern gale,
To scent with her fragrant sweets the vale.

Night rolling on her darkest hour,
Had clos'd the cup of many a flower ;
And soft Fingaris' silver light,
Was bursting through the clouds of night ;
She heard, as if approaching near,
The whistle of the gondolier ;
The plaintive dashing of whose oar,
Would seem as though it near'd that shore.
At length, their oars well ply'd, they reach
The creak that opens to the beach ;
And landing there, their bark they hove
To moor beneath the sheltering cove.

To sad misfortune's wayward child,
 How sweet the streamlet in the wild ;
 But far more sweet the fond caress,
 When heart to heart two lovers press :
 Yes ! they have met !—to part again,
 'Twas but a short liv'd truce with pain.

A band of Tartars through the night,
 Comes pouring from the mountain's height ;
 Their fiery sabres gleaming bright,
 Reflect the beams of the pale moon's light ;
 Like the big waves of ocean's flood,
 They rush along the olive wood,
 To where SAFIE and SELIM stood ;
 There wait their noble chieftain's will,
 Prepar'd his wishes to fulfil,
 His friends or foes to save or kill.

Forth to the scene of death advancing,
 Their battle chargers proudly prancing,
 The death-shot rung in SELIM's ear, (1)
 By which he deem'd some foe was near ;

And what he deem'd was sooth I trow,
 There lurk'd in ambush many a foe,
 For soon he saw his bride laid low.

}

So falls beneath the polar storm,
 The blooming flow'ret's tender form ;
 There fell that night the fairest flower,
 That ever bloom'd its summer hour ;

But vengeance rose as the maiden fell,
 And woeful murder's wildest yell,
 Shall peal her last sad funeral knell.

}

" Now death thou'rt welcome," SELIM cried,

" There fell my hope, my love, my pride !

}

" Yet would I ere this hour had died,

" Yon dark ey'd HOURI with a kiss,

" Invites me to the halls of bliss ;

" We rush to vengeance and to death,

" But spare not, by our Prophet's faith."

The chief a thousand Tartars led,
 And many a deathful shot was sped ;

E

Earth groan'd beneath the heaps of dead,
 And all in wild confusion fled,
 Save those that in the battle bled.
 And Horror, the dark fiend of night,
 Smil'd o'er the carnage of the fight;
 The flame from the foundation rent
 Those once gay scenes of merriment;
 Those scenes where pleasure used to smile,
 Now blaz'd for the dead a funeral pile;
 Those hills in mournful ruins laid,
 Revenge's monument display'd;
 And few remain'd, I ween, to tell
 Of those that in the battle fell;
 Of SELIM nought is known beside,
 Save that in the fight he died,
 And shar'd the grave of his murder'd bride.

NOTES.



(a) "Outvie the golden kerhubâr."

Kerhubâr,—Gold coloured amber, a simile very common among Eastern poets.

(b) "Of Moslem faith and warrior deed."

Fighting was an article in their faith, strictly-enjoyn'd by Mahomet as the chief passport into Paradise.

(c) Then curs'd the tyrant for a giaour."

As the usual form of addressing the Sultans and Caliphs of the East was, "Commander of the Faithful," "Son of the Prophet," "ALLA's Vicegerent," &c. it could be paying him no great compliment to curse him for an infidel.

(d) "When Azrael comes on clouds of fire."

Azrael, the angel of death.

(e) Shall perish all, nor leave one trace."

It was the obliging custom of those arbitrary gentlemen, when they made a provision for any of their Viziers after this manner, to confer a similar favour upon all his relations and friends.

(f) "The fog-born fires"

Notwithstanding the ingenious arguments of some naturalists to prove these "*Water fiends*" insects, the more vulgar acceptance is sufficiently strong to justify the simile.

(g) "The spirit's misty pinions wave."

The spirit of the cape, for which see Camoen's *Luciad*.

(k) "the wild Circassian dance."

The Circassian women were not particularly delicate in their manner of dancing. I shall not enter into a description of the figuring or attitudinizing, but suppose it was not more wild than waltzing, or more loose than opera dancing. In agility, however, and variety we are infinitely their inferior; and the best dancers that ever graced our opera, can boast no more comparison with the Persian ladies, than can the worst figuranti alide and posture like Parisot.

(i) "Stalk'd many a goule amid the gloom."

Goules were supposed to inhabit the tombs of the dead, and to prey upon dead bodies. Superstition seems to be in as high a state of refinement in the East, as any where.

(j) "In language of the fruit and flower."

The ladies in the Turkish Harems invented a language or manner of expressing the affection they often entertain for each other, by fruits, flowers, &c. They institute an expression which rhymes to some flower, &c. and upon displaying it to the object beloved, he associates the idea of the expression which rhymes to it. There is a very good article on this subject, in Mr. Valpey's Classical Journal,—where it is illustrated by several examples of this kind of making love in Rhyme.

(k) "The bulbul mid the groves forlorn."

The nightingale, whose passion for the rose is a well known Persian story.

(l) "The death-shot rung in SELIM's ear."

The gift of preaudition was very common in the East; there is an instance given in the notes to the Giaour.

THE END.

